



REGIONAL SELF ADVOCACY

NEWSLETTER

SONOMA * NAPA * SOLANO

SUMMER 2012

The Sacramento Self Advocacy Conference

By Ken Grover

For many years now I have taken part in a conference in Sacramento known as the self advocacy conference. This event is designed to teach people how to deal with life problems.

The planning team puts this event together every year. There are 15 people on this team. The team does many things at the conference each year such as help run the sessions; help people find their way to their rooms in the hotel. The team sells t-shirts at the conference every year. The team meets three to four times to prepare before the conference.

There are many things I have learned to do because I have attended this conference every year. For instance, I am living on my own in an apartment in Benicia, I have received three degrees from Solano Junior college and I use Para transit services every day. I am also involved with the community through church, college and Pace. I communicate with my family and friends by e-mail.



ADVOCATES IN ACTION

Willy Benge wrote this letter to Napa Vine Transit to advocate for a bus stop closer to North Bay Regional Center. Great work Willy!



Napa Vine Transit Center Bus
1151 Pearl Street
Napa, CA 94599

Dear Napa Vine Transit,

I am disabled, and I have to take the bus to various places. We have a Regional Self Advocacy Meeting three times a year at the North Bay Regional Center (NBRC), located at 10 Executive Court, Napa. Right now to get to NBRC, I have to take two buses from Benicia. The bus stop near NBRC is across highway 29 which is very dangerous for people like me who don't walk fast to cross the busy highway. I don't walk as fast as other people and could be hit by a car since people are always in a rush when driving. The drivers don't like to wait for anyone crossing the highway.

Could you please consider putting a bus stop near NBRC, 10 Executive Court for myself and other disabled people. That way no one is in danger of crossing highway 29.

It would also be nice for North Bay Regional Center to have a bus stop near the facility to help others with disabilities go there to attend meetings and if they have a job there, it would be more convenient, too.

Once again, please consider adding a bus stop to help the community arrive safely at North Bay Regional Center.

Sincerely,

Willy Benge

ADVOCATES IN ACTION



WineBev's Self Advocacy Group

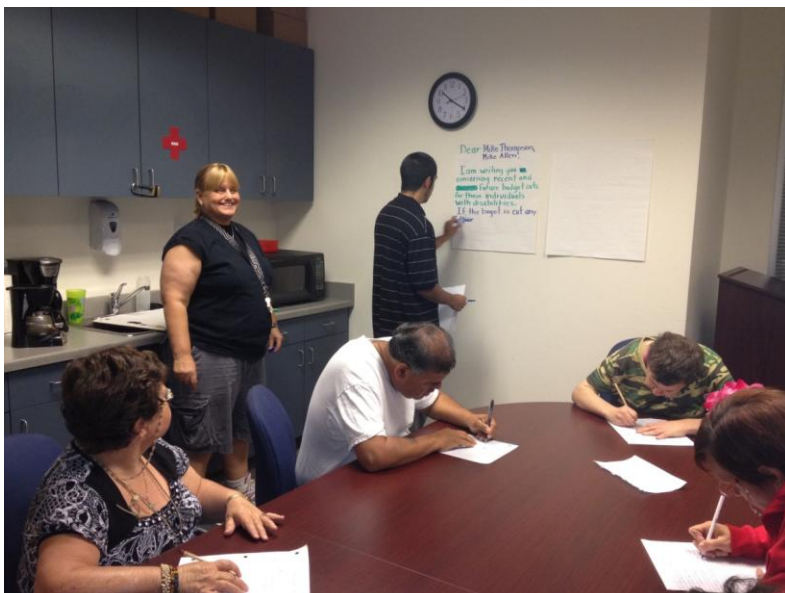
At the last Regional Self Advocacy meeting, Kathy J. said she wanted to start a self advocacy group at WineBev. WineBev helped Kathy to get a group started. The first meeting was held in early June, with supervisor Jenny helping.

We met at lunch time, so that all those who wanted to participate wouldn't miss out on work opportunities. The meeting started by playing the "Get up stand up" song by Bob Marley, about standing up for your rights. Everyone really enjoyed the music. And it was a good way to start the meeting!

The agenda topics for the first meeting were: What is advocacy? What is self-advocacy? Then we got into rights via the Lanterman Act, and passed out a handout on rights.

We talked about what we could do to advocate: letter writing, voting, phone calls, protesting, etc. We talked about what Project SEED presented on letter writing, such as including a photo, keeping it simple, and sticking to one topic.

After that, we reviewed the minutes from the Regional Self-Advocacy meeting. We planned the topics for our next meeting. The topics for the next meeting are Social Security, IHSS, making more money, and saving jobs at WineBev.



WineBev's self advocacy group writing letters to legislators.

Oaks of Hebron's Farm

Stephanie H. has worked at Oaks of Hebron's farm for about three years. They grow flowers and vegetables and sell their products at the Oaks of Hebron office, at the farm, and at NBRC in Santa Rosa. 15 people work at the farm.

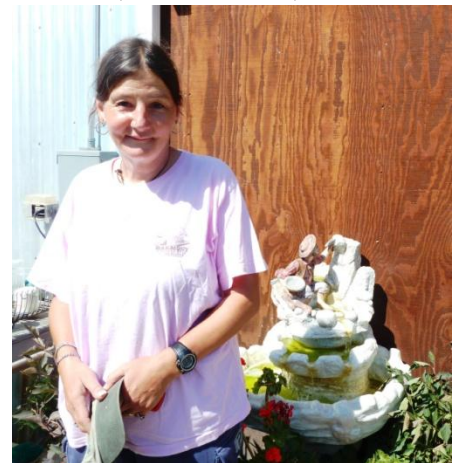


Stephanie said, "I love the whole farm, it is wonderful and I'm proud of the whole farm."



Everything they grow is organic. They built a greenhouse to start plants from seeds. When the plants get big enough, they're planted outside. Sometimes gophers try to eat the vegetables! The farm grows all kinds of things: onions, tomatoes, asparagus, beets, artichokes, spinach, carrots, sunflowers and much more.

Stephanie met Todd at the farm. She said, "Todd was very quiet when he started to work at the farm. As he was getting settled down and enjoying the work he started to tease me and chase me around with mulch." Todd and Stephanie started dating and now they have been living together for over a year.



Thanks to Stephanie, Farmer Jim, and all the other workers for giving us a great tour of the farm!



When People have a Mental Health Crisis

By Jimmy Lee Marks, Statewide Self Advocacy Network Representative



My article is about mental health crises and how you should approach someone if they are having one. If someone is showing uncontrolled anger, they're yelling, or throwing things, they are probably having a mental health crisis. When someone has a crisis, it's hard for them to think and they may be extremely

sad or angry. A confrontational manner towards a person who is having a mental health crisis often only makes the situation worse, so don't be negative or bossy with them.

I've found that too many people talking to a person in crisis at once is overwhelming to their senses and brain. If you see someone at work or your program having a hard time, get a staff person. If it's a friend, ask what they want or need. Calmly and quietly talk with the person from a safe distance. See if they want to talk, be left alone, or go someplace quiet. Advocate for them by letting other people know what calms them down.

Never ever try to physically discipline a person who is having outbursts. You will probably end up hurting them or yourself. I believe law enforcement should have more trainings on mental health crises.

ADVOCACY TIP



VOTE

The next election is November 6, 2012.

Some of the things you can vote on in this election are: President, US Senator, US Congressmembers, Calif Senators and Assemblymembers. You can also vote about new laws for Calif including a temporary tax increase for education, safe drinking water, and the death penalty.

The deadline to register to vote in this election is Oct 22.

ADVOCACY TIP

SSI & Work



If you earn money from a job, make sure your IPP says who is responsible for reporting your income to social security. That way everyone on your team is clear about whose job it is to report your income. If your income is not reported correctly and social security later says you have an overpayment, you can use your IPP to show that someone else was responsible for reporting your income. If you can show that it's not your fault that your income wasn't reported, you may not have to pay the overpayment.

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6th Regional Self Advocacy Meeting

Thursday, September 27, 2012

10:00 am – 1:00 pm

(please come at 9:45 to check in)

NBRC Conference Room

25 Executive Court, Napa

- ❖ Come and learn about the HISTORY OF RIGHTS from Yulahlia Hernandez and Annie Breuer from Disability Rights California/Office of Clients Rights Advocacy.
- ❖ Give us an update on what your self advocacy group is working on, what your concerns are, what your goals and accomplishments are.
- ❖ Lunch will be provided by NBRC.
- ❖ Please let us know if you need any accommodations.

If you have any questions or to RSVP, please contact:

* Randy Kitch, North Bay Regional Center, 707-256-1162 or

* Cindy Ruder, Area Board 4, 707-953-8403